



September 11, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

The mission of the Ponca City Public School district is “to ensure that all students are prepared to live and work successfully in a global society.” We have two district goals that are directly related to this mission. Goal #1: “All students will learn a rigorous content-based curriculum within a 21st Century framework of collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity.” Goal #7: “The district will provide and sustain a technology enriched environment that is necessary to support student learning within a 21st Century framework.”

I have been a superintendent for 18 years, which is two years longer than the E-Rate program has been in existence. When I think of how far we have come in the last 16 years, there are not words to adequately describe how amazed I am. Sixteen years ago, very few school districts had computers. Those that did were struggling to get a computer in every classroom, and schools were thrilled to have a dial-up connection. We did not know the difference between a LAN and a WAN; we did not have email; and we were just learning what a T-1 line was.

In my current district today, we have wireless networks at all ten of our school sites. We are 1 to 1 grades 8-12, we have one iPad cart per every two classrooms at our lower grade levels, and we have smart boards in every classroom Pre-K-12. All of our buildings are connected to a central location with fiber. We have a 500 MB pipe (for lack of a better term) for Internet connections, and we have a combination of 70 virtual and physical servers to run our network. None of this would be possible without E-Rate.

In my opinion, E-Rate is driving the technology innovation in our schools, and the only thing that is holding us back from even more innovation is a lack of E-Rate funding. It is my personal belief that the future of education belongs to those school districts, states, and nations that unleash the power of the Internet to drive instruction. We are just getting started and how quickly we get there depends on how much E-Rate funding is available to allow school districts and educators to dream about what might be.

Sincerely,

David Pennington, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools